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ACTION: Embassy, PARIS PRIORITY 6319

If opportunity presents itself in your meeting with de Gaulle you should attempt correct some misconceptions on his part on underlying rationale of US exploratory talks with Soviets on Berlin which became apparent during his May 15 press conference. Same line could also be used as appropriate in Embassy contacts with ForOff.

By negative implication de Gaulle apparently under impression US is engaged in definitive attempt to settle problem of Germany. This may be among Soviet objectives as embodied in their concept of drawing line under World War II, but US is under no illusions on this point. Our position remains, as it has always been, that only lasting solution to German and Berlin problems would be reunification of country in freedom with reunited Berlin as capital of this unified Germany. We are also realistic enough to recognize that this goal is unlikely to be achieved in foreseeable future, given basically conflicting Communist and Free World interests in Central Europe.

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FORM DS-322

Dept. of State (EUR-77-714)
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In explaining US approach, we have found useful conceptual framework analyzing discussions with Soviets as taking place on three levels. In this connection, you should draw on exposition in DEPTTEL 5567 to Paris of April 17, reporting Secretary's discussion with Dobrynin on previous day. We believe use of this framework can be helpful in clearing up misconceptions as to purpose of "principles paper" handed to Gromyko by Secretary in Geneva on personal and informal basis.

We cannot agree that certain broader elements included in this paper, such as nuclear nondiffusion, NATO-Warsaw Pact nonaggression statements and possible West German/East German mixed commissions amount to attempt to settle German problem. These are either merely declaratory of existing US policy or attempt to provide mechanisms (as in case of mixed commissions which suggested by Germans themselves) to improve de facto situation for benefit of Berliners, West Germans and population of East Germany.

FYI We would not, of course, anticipate that you could persuade de Gaulle of soundness US approach, given his position that mere posturing behind US nuclear deterrent will somehow or other suffice to prevent Soviets from taking unilateral actions which we cannot prevent and which will necessarily result in de facto deterioration of Berlin situation. On other hand, we do not wish to seem to agree, even by implication, with his assessment that present US/Soviet exchanges amount to

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to it willingness on our part to join with Soviets in drawing line under World War II in manner they desire. END FYI

You might add that we have been in full consultation with the German Government, as we have moved from meeting to meeting with Soviets, and have also tried to keep French fully informed to extent that French Government itself has been willing to permit this. We shall continue our probing of Soviet position. Maintenance of contacts with Soviets on this highly charged question is desirable and we consider that we must continue to explore possibility, consistent with our vital interests, of achieving some modus vivendi. In the event of breakdown and major confrontation over Berlin, we should be able to say that we have discharged fully our responsibility to our people in search for a peaceful solution. We have been glad to note from President de Gaulle's press conference statement that France does not object to employment by US of its diplomatic resources towards this objective.

END

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